



Sincerely yours,
Ted Kaczynski

THE UNABOMBER LETTERS

A YAHOO NEWS SPECIAL REPORT

"The death penalty is more humane than life imprisonment"

Even as his attorneys fought to save his life, Kaczynski wanted the death penalty, saying life in prison is more tortuous — a view he continues to express in letters from prison.

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YAHOO!

NEWS

Especially old technological stuff.

You asked my opinion about the death penalty. I think it's more humane than life imprisonment, and I think quite a few prisoners serving life sentences would agree. Many death-row prisoners have been proved innocent by DNA evidence, but I've never heard of a case of an executed prisoner later being exonerated by

that within two years you would be their Führer, or caudillo, or СЛАВНЫЙ ВОЖДЬ.* Heil Glatzel! Now, don't be in such a hurry. You can at least finish reading this letter before you start packing for your trip to Eugene.

I'm sorry if this letter strikes you as somewhat flippant. The truth is that I'm in a flippant mood today, so you'll just have to put up with it.

As for your "morally conservative" classmates who are opposed to stem-cell research — I'm not sure what stem-cell research is. It has something to do with embryos, doesn't it? In any case, I'm opposed to it too, though not necessarily for the same reasons as your classmates. I'm opposed to nearly all scientific research, especially biotechnological stuff.

You asked my opinion about the death penalty. I think it's more humane than life imprisonment, and I think quite a few prisoners serving life sentences would agree. Many death-row prisoners have been proved innocent by DNA evidence, but I've never heard of a case of an executed prisoner later being exonerated by

* СЛАВНЫЙ ВОЖДЬ = Glorious Leader

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[TJK to

6/27/01]

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DNA evidence. I think there's good reason to believe that innocent prisoners have been executed, but I don't see that that is worse than an innocent prisoner's having to serve a life sentence. Of course, the argument is... Oh, hell with it. I don't want to say anything serious. Not in the mood for it.

I agree with you about the death penalty being "official revenge." I mean, it was natural for the relatives of people killed in the Oklahoma City bombing to want McVeigh to die. That's the law of nature. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life. But if they haven't got the guts to take their own revenge, then they shouldn't whine for the government to do it for them. I'm a great believer in self-reliance. If people want the government to do things for them, then they have no right to complain when the govt. charges them taxes or subjects them to regulations. They can't have it both ways.

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Seriously, now, you don't need to apologize for the birthday-card thing. And I do hope that things are going well for you.

Best regards,

Ted Kaczynski

TED KACZYNSKI
to
JULIEN NITZBERG

July 16, 2001

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Dear Mr. Nitzberg:

I've just received your letter of July 10. I did send you an answer to your letter of June 18. I handed it to prison staff for mailing on July 5. I feel reasonably safe in assuming that you will have received it by the time you get the present letter. If by any chance you haven't, please let me know.

I could say a lot about the death penalty, but I'm not sufficiently interested in that subject to spend much time on it, so I'll mention only a couple of points.

First, one could make a good argument that the death penalty is more humane than life imprisonment. Being in prison is much like being in a zoo, and for a discussion of the devastating effects on wild animals of putting them in zoos you can read The Human Zoo, by Desmond Morris, which also has a great deal to say about implications for modern society. Highly relevant, too, is Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death, by Martin E.P. Seligman.

I like your description of lethal injection as a "medicalized" form of execution. Yes, making execution look like a medical procedure gives it a "clean" image, and the people who run

the system are keenly aware of the importance of projecting appropriate images.

I've heard that lethal-injection executions are often bungled and can get quite messy. When they are carried out competently they are no doubt more humane in a physical sense than old-fashioned methods of execution, but I would argue that one of the reasons why lethal injection is used is that it deprives the condemned person of dignity. He is strapped down to a table, helpless and unable to move. In the old days the condemned might have an opportunity to stand up straight against the wall, stick out his chest, and face the firing squad "like a man," but nowadays the authorities know well that it won't do to give him an opportunity to show courage. He might earn respect that way, which is the last thing they want.

I would prefer not to discuss McVeigh's execution. To do it right would take more time and effort than I'm willing to spend on it.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of your article when it is published.

Best regards,
Ted Kaczynski

I have certain concerns that compete with these goals).

However, there is something you can do to reduce my frustration and improve our relations.

If you agree that I have a right to make a certain decision, then give me all of the facts and arguments that I need to know in order to make the decision, and leave me alone to make the decision. When I have told you that I have made a definite decision, then just accept it and don't give me any more argument about it.

Of course, if you later come up with some new information or arguments that you didn't know about or didn't think of earlier, then please tell me about it and I will reconsider my decision in light of the new information or arguments. But if you keep repeating the same old arguments, then I can rightly say that you are pressuring me.

Okay, let's try it out. I've heard your arguments about the death penalty, and I've made my decision. I refuse to resist the death penalty, for two reasons: First, : iff I'm convicted, and if I'm

still alive ten years from now (or whenever it's time for the penalty to be inflicted) then I would rather be executed than spend more time in prison. Second, one part of my message is to be that death is nothing to be afraid of, but life under demeaning conditions is something to be afraid of. Hence, it would be inconsistent for me to resist the death penalty.

So my decision is made — please accept it. Unless you have some new facts or arguments that you haven't given me yet, I don't want to hear any more about it. I'm getting frustrated about this issue, among others. So this time don't tell me that I didn't tell you I was getting frustrated.